



STATE OFFICE OF RURAL HEALTH
ADVISORY BOARD MEETING
STATE OFFICE OF RURAL HEALTH
February 4, 2021

Present: Stuart Tedders, Member/Secretary
Damien Scott, Member
Jennie Wren Denmark, Chair
Robin Rau, Member
Carla Belcher, Member
Ajay Gehlot, Member
Joe Robinson, Member
Sheila Ramer, Member
Denise Kornegay, Member
Jennifer Dunn, Member
Sallie Barker, Member
Tracie Haughey, Member

SORH Staff: Stephen Register, SORH Executive Director, Ex-Officio
Sheryl McCoy, Board Recording Secretary
Dawn Waldrip, SORH
Nita Ham, SORH
Tiffany Hardin, SORH
Olakesta Outlaw-Houser, SORH
Tina Register, SORH
Dorothy Bryant, SORH
Cole Edwards, SORH
Amanda Laughter, SORH
Beth Walker, SORH

Visitors: Jimmy Lewis, CEO, Hometown Health
Angela Ammons, CEO, Clinch Memorial Hospital

Opening Remarks:

Jennie Wren Denmark, SORH Advisory Board President, called the meeting to order at 10:06 am and asked for approval of the minutes. Damien Scott made motion for minutes to be approved, a second was made by Carla Belcher. The minutes were approved as submitted and the meeting continued according to the agenda.

Stephen Register, Executive Director of SORH, introduced Jimmy Lewis, CEO, from Hometown Health.



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Mr. Lewis gave a presentation entitled “Rural Hospital Issues and Trends.” Mr. Lewis thanked everyone for being able to work with the hospitals during the pandemic. He explained that there was a “cash crunch” and that he was working with legislature to get money to the hospitals and to get it spent.

- Issues with Hospitals during pandemic
 - How to deal with payroll
 - CARES Act/PPE coming in- challenge of how to spend
 - “Sitting” on money until a methodology of how to spend is set in place
- Deeply involved in Transformation of Healthcare
 - How to identify projects to transform
 - Involved in CHART program out of HHS that will move from fee for service DRG to Decapitated rates and patient monitoring and operating out of big data banks
- Use of technology
 - Telemedicine
 - Expanding into remote patient monitoring

Mr. Lewis spoke regarding the Legislative session this year stating that it is fragmented due to Covid-19 and that they are meeting in 3 different meeting rooms. He also stated that they are just now finishing the supplemental budget that will then go to the big budget. The big budget will not have any cuts this year due to tax revenues being higher.

- Vaccines
 - Wild card wherever you go (Rural or Urban)
 - Different types coming out
 - Not enough to go around

Mr. Lewis wanted everyone to know about CEO day with Hometown Health on February 11th that will be a virtual event and that everyone is invited. Also, he let everyone know about the Spring Hometown Health Meeting at Jekyll Island on April 13th-16th and that it will be a face to face meeting.

The meeting was then open for questions: Sallie Barker asked Mr. Lewis about the intersection of Rural Healthcare and Broadband Expansion Initiative. He explained that there is a tremendous shortage of broadband. Money will be pumped into it to improve the broadband in the rural areas. There is a major emphasis on this program. Mr. Lewis mentioned that the rural areas need a “noise maker” to make sure the community stays in the know and in the topics going on.

- Silver Linings to pandemic
 - Learned how to spend money wisely and properly
 - Enhanced the tax credit program

Damien Scott stated that their normal business is way down and that they have had more Covid-19 related issues. He is concerned as to what business will be like after Covid-19. He feels as if sharing information with other hospitals will be the best practice.

Stephen introduced Angela Ammons, CEO, Clinch Memorial Hospital.



Angela Ammons shared her presentation entitled “Reduce, Reuse, Recycle”.

- How was she going to bring a failing hospital back to life?
 - Reduce the number of failing hospitals
 - Reuse the existing structures/facilities
 - Recycle the old into the new

Ms. Ammons stated there was a big disconnect between employees and CEO along with the people of the community including board members who were not engaged. She had to get to work at engaging employees and board members. Asked for help from Robin Rau from Miller County Hospital. Robin jumped in and helped with getting the hospital back in shape.

Ms. Ammons has asked the board for ideas with help in getting Charlton Memorial Hospital opened back up. She has had discussions with county commissioners to possibly be able to expand Clinch Memorial to this area.

There were discussions concerning the project and ideas of how to come to a solution.

After Ms. Ammons presentation, Stephen then summarized the happenings in the SORH office.

- SORH Program
 - Competing Continuation Grant for 5 years
 - Centered around Rural Hospitals meeting designations for trauma centers, cardiac centers, focusing on a pediatric readiness designation.
 - 6th Phase of Rural Hospital Stabilization Program-more hospitals
 - Collaborate with Mercer on an assessment tool
- Hospital Services
 - Heavily involved with SHIP and Flex program
 - Involved with swing bed
- GA Farmworker Health Program
 - National Hypertension Initiative
 - 340B Pharmacy Training for hospitals
 - Care Coordination Training
- PCO
 - All 30 Conrad slots filled
 - NHSC new site applications will open in April
 - Continuing to work on Primary Care/Dental HPSA’s



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Mr. Register also let everyone know that Sheryl McCoy will be retiring at the end of this month and that she will be missed very much. She has been a big part of the SORH for 20 years.

Jennie Wren Denmark adjourned the meeting at 12:01 pm.

Respectively,

Chairman

Secretary

Recording Secretary
(Meeting recorded on 2/4/21 by tr)